

1792A  
EA-00-25  
5401  
E-99-381  
Alton Hill

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

DECISION RECORD and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Alton Hill Timber Sale  
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-EA-00-25  
Sale Tract No. E-99-381

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

On the basis of the information contained in the Environmental Assessment, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the proposed action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl," (NSO ROD, April 1994) and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (RMP, June 1995), with which this EA is in conformance, and does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

**BACKGROUND**

The EA for this proposed action and alternatives was revised from an earlier EA (OR090-EA-98-23) that was made available for public comment in June 1999. That EA was modified to provide new information on the affected environment provided by required surveys; to provide additional analysis based on this new information; and to include proposed mitigation measures to lessen or avoid impacts based on this new information. A Finding of No Significant Impact was concluded based on the analysis in the revised EA.

**DECISION**

It is the decision of the Bureau of Land Management to select the Proposed Action described in the Alton Hill EA No. OR090-EA-00-25. This EA and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts.

This alternative was designed to provide forest products, accelerate diameter growth and Riparian Reserve structural development, and enhance in-stream structure. Implementation of this decision will result in forest management activities including: road construction; density management of Matrix; density management of Riparian Reserves; large woody debris creation within Riparian

Reserves; and felling trees to increase in-stream structure. All design features identified in the EA (pp. 3-5) would be implemented.

The selected alternative is in conformance with the following documents:

"Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl," (NSO ROD, April 1994).

"Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (RMP, June 1995).

## **ALTERNATIVES**

In addition to the selected alternative, the EA considered two other alternatives in detail (EA, pp. 5-6). Alternative A would involve a regeneration harvest of the Matrix with density management treatment of Riparian Reserves. Alternative B is the "no action" alternative and would involve no management activities.

## **RATIONALE FOR SELECTION**

The purpose of this action is to provide forest products while reducing stand density to optimize volume growth in the Matrix portion; hasten late-successional structural characteristics in the Riparian Reserves; and enhance stream habitat conditions.

The use of ground-based yarding to implement the Proposed Action and Alternative A was inadvertently omitted from the EA. Ground-based yarding would not be allowed within the Riparian Reserves and would adhere to the BMPs of the RMP. Since ground-based operations would not cause an impact greater than those analyzed in the EA and RMP, ground-based yarding will be allowed as described in the revised EA (page 5).

The Proposed Action best meets the purpose of the action. It provides forest products by density management in the Matrix. It would accelerate diameter growth of retention trees in both the Matrix and Riparian Reserves; hasten canopy layering and establishment and growth of shade-tolerant conifers in the Riparian Reserves; and hasten the formation of gravel deposition and deep pools in a fishbearing stream. It would maintain the health of the forest ecosystem by the retention, reserve, and rehabilitation measures consistent with the standards and guidelines for the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations. As discussed in the EA (pp. 9-16), the two action alternatives would have similar effects on road density and on most Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) Objectives. The Proposed Action would have more positive long-term effects on species associated with late-successional forests than Alternative A because Alternative A would remove foraging habitat that would take many more decades to recover than the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is expected to improve foraging habitat over time.

Alternative A would have a greater impact of non-native plant colonization because of the increased sunlight available after regeneration harvest, and the related microclimatic shifts. Because of the buffering effect of a greater number of retention trees with the Proposed Action, Alternative A may have a greater impact on the known sites of survey and manage/protection buffer species. Alternative A would produce more timber to meet the purpose of providing forest products. However, the result would be a greater adverse effect on species associated with late-successional forests than the Proposed Action.

Alternative B (no action) would provide no timber and therefore does not meet the purpose of providing forest products. Alternative B would not hasten late-successional conditions and would not enhance stream conditions.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

A public notice advertising the availability of the EA and FONSI appeared in the Eugene Register-Guard on June 28, 2000. Additionally, the EA and FONSI were mailed to interested individuals and organizations (EA, pp. 17-18). A 30-day public comment period closed on June 28, 2000. No comments were received for this EA. One comment was received on the 1999 EA and is addressed in the current EA.

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, consultation was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which found that the action "...[is] not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl or result in the destruction or adverse modification of spotted owl critical habitat."

Consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service is not required for this Proposed Action or Alternatives.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been notified of this proposal and has determined, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.5(b), that the proposed undertaking would have no effect on cultural resources.

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde were notified of this project during the scoping process, requesting information regarding tribal issues or concerns relative to the project. No response was received.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

This decision will be implemented by (1) a timber sale contract and (2) a service contract or BLM directly. A timber sale contract will implement the road construction, timber harvest, felling of trees for large woody debris, and decommissioning of roads used for timber harvest operations described in the Proposed Action (EA, pp. 3-5). A service contract or BLM will implement the felling of trees for in-stream structure.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES**

The decision to implement the timber sale portion of this project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for the timber sale portion of this project will not be subject to protest until the notice of sale is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on August 30, 2000. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of the timber sale portion of this project. 43 CFR 5003.2(b) Protests of the timber sale portion of this decision must be filed with this office within fifteen (15) days after first publication of the notice of sale.

The decision to implement the service contract/non-timber sale portion of this project may be appealed to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, the notice of appeal must be filed in this office within thirty (30) days of the first publication of the notice of this decision in the Eugene Register-Guard on August 30, 2000, for transmittal to the Board. A

copy of the notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs, must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 500 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 607, Portland, Oregon 97323, within the same time frame. In taking an appeal, there must be strict compliance with the regulations. In accordance with 43 CFR 4.21, an appellant has the right to petition the Office of Hearing and Appeals to stay the implementation of the decision; however, an appellant must show standing and present reasons for requesting a stay of the decision. The petition for stay must be filed together with a timely notice of appeal. (43 CFR 4.21(a)(2)).

Signed by: *Steven Calish*  
Field Manager, South Valley Resource Area

Date: August 23, 2000